



Working on Health Care for Kansans

Controlling the cost of healthcare and prescription drugs dominated the discussion at a recent meeting I attended of the National Governors Association. Frustrated by the federal government's inaction on this important issue, governors around the country are preparing to tackle the problem on their own.

Here in Kansas, I created the Governor's Office of Health Planning and Finance to put together a plan to do four things:

- Help Kansas businesses, particularly small businesses; provide health coverage for their employees.
- Help working Kansas families and their children who now lack coverage obtain affordable healthcare.
- Use the state's multi-billion dollar purchasing power to force reforms in the healthcare system that will help control costs.
- And encourage Kansans to make personal decisions that will not only improve their health, but will also help control healthcare costs.

State government must focus its limited resources on doing those things that are most important to the people it serves. In Kansas, that means we must maintain the quality of our schools, create and sustain a business climate that allows us to recruit and generate jobs, and make healthcare more affordable for businesses and working Kansans.

Currently, more than 90 percent of Kansans who lack health coverage either work or are members of working families. They earn too much to be eligible for Medicaid, the state program for low-income Kansans. But they still can't afford the ever-increasing cost of private-sector insurance.

Working with doctors, hospitals and the business community, I am determined to find a way to provide health coverage to more working Kansas families.

We can't afford to wait any longer on the federal government. There are steps that we can and must take in Kansas to both expand access to affordable coverage and control the costs of healthcare and prescription drugs.